

NEWS RELEASE

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SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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For Immediate Release

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Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on February 10, 2005, **PATRICK P. KARNS**, age 39, of Olney, Illinois, Illinois pleaded guilty to a one-count Indictment in Federal Court in Benton, Illinois.

The Indictment charged that from on or about Fall 1999, the exact date being unknown, through on or about August 2004, in Richland and Edwards Counties, and elsewhere in the Southern District of Illinois, KARNS did knowingly and intentionally combine, conspire, and agree with Gregory Lee Coan, Thomas Bradley Leigh, and others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, to knowingly and intentionally manufacture and distribute five hundred (500) grams or more of a mixture and substance containing methamphetamine, a Schedule II controlled substance, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) and 841(b)(1)(A); all in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 846.

A sentencing hearing for KARNS has been set for May 23, 2005, at the United States Courthouse in Benton, Illinois. KARNS faces a penalty of 10 years to life imprisonment, a fine of up to \$4,000,000, and a term of supervised release of at least 5 years.

The investigation was conducted by the Richland County Sheriff's Office, the Olney Police Department, and the Illinois State Police pursuant to their participation in the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. Under the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutors are working together to prosecute drug dealers, felons in possession of firearms, and criminals that use firearms to commit violent offenses or drug trafficking offenses in the Southern District of Illinois.

The Richland County States Attorney's Office has assisted throughout the investigation and has prosecuted a number of individuals in related cases in Richland County Circuit Court.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney George Norwood.